

HISTORY

The **Harford County Teen Court** was implemented in May 2010 and is managed by the Harford County Sheriff's Office Community Services Division and the Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy. It is a voluntary diversion program that is used to resolve misdemeanor offenses without requiring intervention by the Department of Juvenile Services.

The idea of Teen Court is based on two principles: everyone has a right to be judged by a group of his or her peers, and people deserve a chance to make up for their mistakes. These diversion programs teach responsibility while restoring a sense of safety in the community.

The Harford County Teen Court is a member of the Maryland Teen Court Association. For more information, visit www.mdtca.org.



For more information, please contact the
Office of Drug Control Policy
at 410.638.3333
or email: teencourt@harfordcountymd.gov
or visit
www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/drugcontrol



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Harford County Executive

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Funding for this program provided by
Harford County Department of Juvenile Services.

HARFORD COUNTY TEEN COURT



Office of Drug Control Policy
Harford County Department
of Community Services



WHAT IS TEEN COURT?

The Harford County Teen Court Program is a voluntary diversion program used to resolve misdemeanor offenses for youths 11-17 without requiring intervention by the Department of Juvenile Services. Youth who successfully complete the program avoid a juvenile record for their offense while focusing on accountability and development.

HOW IT WORKS

A Teen Court Hearing is held with a jury of the participant's peers, local volunteer teens, who ask the juvenile offender questions to understand the incident and assist with determining appropriate sanctions. The jury then deliberate privately to decide what sanctions the youth offender should be given. Sanctions may include that the youth:

- Complete community service;
- Serve jury duty;
- Compose an essay;
- Attend anger management or educational programs;
- Participate in counseling; or
- Complete other creative sanctions.

Harford County District Court Judges preside over all of the Teen Court cases and approve recommended sanctions.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR TEEN COURT?

Cases are referred by local law enforcement agencies, school systems and the Department of Juvenile Services. To be eligible, the youth must:

- Be between the ages of 11-17
- Be a first-time offender
- Be charged in Harford County
- Admit their guilt

The youth offender will explain the incident in his/her own words at an initial meeting. The coordinator will then determine eligibility for a Teen Court hearing. Every participant is required to have an alcohol/drug assessment and screening.

HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER?

Volunteers can earn 3 service learning hours each session. The teen jury consists of students in grades 8-12 who reside in Harford County or attend a Harford County Public School. Adult volunteers act as guides for the teen jury. Some jurors are strictly volunteers and others may have been past participants who have received jury duty as a sanction. Volunteers are expected to maintain confidentiality about what they observe in court at all times. Trainings are held twice a year for new volunteers. For more information, email teencourt@harfordcountymd.gov or call 410-638-3333 to register for the next training

WHEN & WHERE

Hearings are scheduled for the 1st Thursday of each month, unless otherwise noted. Intakes and assessments are held at 125 North Main Street in Bel Air by appointment only. Teen Court hearings are held at the Bel Air District Courthouse, 2 South Bond Street. Parking is available in the lot after 4:30 p.m. Hearings are not open to the public.

MISSION

To provide first-time misdemeanor youth offenders an opportunity to restore relationships within their communities and provide them the resources to improve future decision making.

For more information, please contact the Office of Drug Control Policy at 410.638.3333 or visit www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/drugcontrol